

Story-retelling: Ten Plagues

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Source: The Minimalist Haggadah by Jon Kessler

Aaron raised his staff and struck the water of the Nile:

דָּם BLOOD (for each of these, *dip a finger in wine cup & put a drop on the plate, but don't lick the finger*)

Fish died. The river smelled. There was no water for anyone. But Pharaoh's court magicians did the same to the water, so Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go. A week passed; Moses and Aaron returned to Pharaoh to ask again. Aaron raised the staff over the nearby streams and ponds:

צְפַרְדֵּי FROGS

Frogs hopped out everywhere and on everyone, but Pharaoh's court magicians were able to make this happen too. Pharaoh said, "I'll think about letting the Israelites go tomorrow." Moses called upon God and all the frogs died, making a big stink. The next day, Pharaoh still said no. Aaron raised the staff over the dust on the ground:

כִּנִּים LICE

All the dust became bugs: lice, gnats, and fleas came on all the people and all the animals. The court magicians tried to do this too - but couldn't. Pharaoh still said no. The next morning, Moses and Aaron returned to meet Pharaoh by the river and advised that the next round would not impact the Israelite homes. Out came:

עֲרֹב WILD BEASTS

A mixed assortment of wolf-like animals, snakes, scorpions and other venomous creatures attacked everyone except the Israelites. Pharaoh said, "Okay, go out to the wilderness for your prayer festival but not too far. And pray for me." Moses prayed, the beasts departed, and Pharaoh changed his mind. Moses and Aaron returned to Pharaoh and advised another stress would come the next day:

דָּבָר PESTILENCE

All the livestock became diseased and died, except for those belonging to the Israelites. But Pharaoh would not change his mind. So God had Moses and Aaron take soot from a nearby kiln and throw it in the air near Pharaoh:

שָׁחִין BOILS

Festering infections struck the skin of humans and animals, except it did not touch the Israelites. But Pharaoh would not change his mind. The next day, Moses and Aaron returned to meet Pharaoh. This time, Moses stretched the staff up towards the heavens:

בָּרָד HAIL

Accompanied by powerful lightening and loud thunder, stones of ice crashed from the sky on humans and animals, smashing crops and trees; but none fell on the Israelites. Pharaoh cried, "Okay, I'm a sinner. Enough. I'll let you go." Moses left to pray and the storms stopped. So Pharaoh changed his mind. Moses returned and told Pharaoh, "God wants to know how long is it going to take? Tomorrow God will send another sign!" Pharaoh's courtiers, exhausted by it all, encouraged Pharaoh to change his mind - but he didn't. The next day, Moses stretched out the staff:

אַרְבֵּה LOCUSTS

Enormous swarms everywhere ate all the plants and trees. Pharaoh cried again to Moses and Aaron, "Okay, I'm a sinner. I'll let you go." Moses prayed again and a strong west wind forced the locust out of the area. But Pharaoh changed his mind again. So Moses stretched the staff towards the sky again:

חֹשֶׁךְ DARKNESS

For 3 days, no one could see. No one could move. No one could understand anything. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, saying, "Okay, you can go. The men can go. The women can go. Even the children can go. But leave all your livestock behind." Moses through Aaron said, "No, we need the livestock, too." So, Pharaoh changed his mind, saying "Go away and take care to never see my face again - for on that day, you will die." While leaving, Moses agreed, "I will never see your face again."

Moses, Aaron and Miriam gathered the Israelite elders, telling them, "Have each family slaughter a lamb, gather some hyssop, dip the hyssop in the lamb's blood, and smear it on the sides and top of each door frame. Have everyone stay inside tonight. God will see the blood on the door and will **PASS OVER** the house en route to strike down those who oppress you." At midnight, around the rest of the Narrow Places:

מִכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN

A loud cry rose from all the houses, including Pharaoh, for all the first-born children and first-born animals were struck down.

